

Mary Maarbjerg

March 10, 2022

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee,

**I am writing in support of SB284, an act increasing the age from eight to eighteen years for an income-eligible person to obtain medical assistance regardless of immigration status.** I am a retired Pitney Bowes executive. I am also on the Board of Directors of Building One Community, a nonprofit agency whose mission is to advance the successful integration of immigrants and their families within our communities. I am writing as an individual citizen, not as a representative of that agency.

The health and well-being of our immigrant families is an essential component of our state's economic growth and prosperity. An inflow of workers to our state is essential to sustaining our economy, and foreign-born people have historically made tremendous contributions to business formation and to filling vital jobs as essential workers. We all witnessed this commitment firsthand during the pandemic, as immigrants delivered, stocked, cleaned, built and were caregivers despite the personal risks they faced, including getting sick themselves.

**While the state of Connecticut expanded access to HUSKY for children ages 0-8, I strongly believe S.B. 284 should be passed to increase coverage for income-eligible children from ages 8-18.**

- The current health insurance coverage limit to age 8 is arbitrary. Children lose coverage by simply growing a year older, and yet the need for care has not diminished at all.
- Within a household, everyone can become exposed to an infectious disease such as COVID, regardless of age. It is difficult to justify disparate treatment of minors, of the same family, living under the same roof.
- If a child does not receive necessary medical care, a parent will have to choose between working and staying home to care for that child. These choices can lead quickly to food insecurity, job loss, inability to pay rent, and worse. Proper medical care would help mitigate those costly consequences.
- The 8-18 age group has been particularly hard hit with mental health issues triggered by the pandemic and associated isolation. Assistance for this age group will be beneficial to these children, to their families, and to the community at large.

I strongly support **S.B. 284** and urge the committee to pass this important legislation.

Mary Maarbjerg